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The Pastor Speaks

CHRIST

Last week we explored briefly the word "paschal" as it relates to our reflective understanding of the humble Jesus from the even more humble town of Nazareth.

If you are working in a cabinet shop with others and you don't know a gouge from a saw or a C-clamp from a screwdriver you will contribute inefficiency to the operation because of the resulting poor communication.

Our religious discipline has its vocabulary, too. It behooves us to learn this language so that our communication will be more effective and our worship more profound.

"Messiah" means simply "anointed". In the books of Exodus and 1 Samuel we read accounts of the use of anointing with oil to set apart the High Priests of Israel and to set apart Saul and David to the kingship of Israel.

Through time the phrases "the anointed one" and "Yah-wey's anointed" became synonymous with "king of Israel". The phrases were not used in the Old Testament to refer to a future one whom God would raise up to restore once and for all the Kingdom of David. The phrases always referred to a specific king of Israel, usually the then reigning one.

In the last centuries prior to the Christian era the Israelites became a despairing people. Hope had faded for the peaceful existence of their nation. Israel had fallen prey to the Assyrians, Judah to the Babylonians. All had fallen prey to the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans in turn. Life was complicated and frustrating. They began to look to God to intervene directly in their history, perhaps as He had done through Moses in Egypt and through Cyrus in Babylon. There was probably hope that the Maccabean uprising would turn out to be such an intervention.

The son of a carpenter in Nazareth came on the scene quite unobtrusively. If you read the secular history of Israel and expect to find Jesus coming on strongly you will be disappointed. Jesus functioned very much in the classical prophetic tradition and/or as a rabbi. He taught and did as his Father gave him direciton through his intense prayer discipline. He had been born and reared a Jew - circumcision - bar mitzvah. It is apparent that he had studied the Hebrew Scriptures. He died a Jew.

Did He ever think of himself as "the anointed one"? Did He ever think of Himself as the Messiah (same thing)? It's difficult for us to answer this positively either way and defend our position against all comers.

We do know, however, beyond a shadow of doubt that his followers came to appreciate Him as such. We know that Peter is reported to have suggested to Him that He is the Christ (Messiah-anointed).

But the writers of the New Testament proclaimed the gospel that God has at last come to their rescue again. He has anointed Jesus (his baptism?); He has raised up a Saviour (as he had raised up Saul and David); He has freed us from oppression (as He did in Egypt and in Babylon).

The sort of enslavement he has freed us from is different from the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and of the Judeans in Babylon, isn't it? The sort of kingdom He has established is different from the kingdom of David and Solomon, isn't it?

The Hebrew Jesus of Nazareth is indeed to us the Christ = Messiah = the anointed one.

Thanks be to God for Jesus of Nazareth - the Christ. Amen.

The Rev. J. Harmon Smith
St. Anne's Church
Appomattox, Va.

Receive Degrees

Miss Patricia Ann Hudson of Pamplin and Miss Sarah Marie Hunter of Red House have received Bachelor of Science degrees from The School of Pharmacy, Medical College of Virginia, Richmond.

Warren E. Weaver, Dean of the School of Pharmacy, presented candidates their degrees.

The Sunday School Lesson

COMMENTS BY HERBERT C. BRADSHAW

LESSON FOR MAY 23, 1976

THE CHALLENGE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Scripture: 1 Cor. 6:9-20; Galatians 5:13-26

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. I Cor. 6:19-20

At first reading it may seem strange that a Scripture passage which condemns sexual immorality and explains why it is wrong should be made the text for a lesson dealing with the drug and alcohol problem. On closer study it becomes apparent that the principles Paul uses to show why sexual immorality is sin are applicable to any practice or indulgence which harms the body.

In Corinth, where the church to which Paul was writing was located, sexual immorality was a major problem for Christians. A port city and commercial center, it abounded in houses of prostitution catering to the traders and sailors who came there in great numbers. Also, the patron goddess of Corinth was Aphrodite, whose temple was served by 1,000 priestess - prostitutes; thus the city's religion encouraged immorality. This was the background out of which came the Christian community gathered by Paul in Corinth.

Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians that some of them had engaged in immorality and crime. But they had been cleansed and set apart (sanctified) and justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." This made a difference. The immoral and the criminal will not inherit the kingdom of God, if they continue in those ways. But such can enter the kingdom by being redeemed and transformed. It is important for Christians to remember that with God there is always opportunity for repentance and forgiveness.

The Scriptural teachings on marriage emphasize that the man and the woman who have a sexual relationship become one flesh. This unity and the integrity of the family explain the Scriptural teaching against sex outside marriage and the Scriptural ideal that marriage is a lifetime partnership of one man and one woman. Since the believer has given himself to Christ, his body has become a member of Christ. For a believer to engage in prostitution, then, is "to take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute." This reasoning brings us to the realization that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit indwelling in the individual, to the fundamental principle that one should not indulge in what harms the body, and to the sublimely beautiful concept that one who is "united with the Lord becomes one spirit with him."

At this point that application may be made to indulgence in alcohol and other drugs. The harm these do is evident to everyone. They damage mind and body and destroy personality. Every reader of this comment knows people whose lives have been wrecked, whose minds and bodies have been damaged, even destroyed by indulgence in alcohol and other drugs. Following Paul's reasoning, the believer who harms his body from such indulgence harms a member of Christ and prevents himself from rendering the service he owes his God and abuses the salvation Christ accomplished for him.

Some Corinthians tried to justify their immorality on the ground of Christian freedom. "All things are lawful for me," they would say, which means, "I can do what I want to." Paul countered that argument by pointing out that some things are not helpful to the believer in leading a godly life and that some things enslave an individual. The freedom with which God endowed the human being allows him to choose between God and evil. If he chooses evil, he makes himself a salve to sin. The individual who becomes addicted to alcohol or some other drug makes himself a slave to it.

Choosing evil is the exercise of freedom but not Christian freedom. Christian freedom is the freedom to do God's will and in doing it to have the opportunity to develop to one's highest potential. Paul called himself the servant of Jesus Christ and so should every believer, for he has been redeemed from slavery to sin by Christ. Hence the believer is not his own, but he belongs to Christ, for Christ has ransomed him. Since one's being is an integral unit in its totality, he cannot honor God with his spirit and dishonor Him with his body.

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Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Well Attended

The twenty fifth anniversary of the Galilee Baptist Church was well attended last Sunday evening at 3 p.m. The following program was enjoyed by all present: A call to worship, by Mr. Robert Watson; Devotions, by guest minister and his chorus; Welcome address, Mr. John A. Watson; Response, Deacon Emmette Fleshman; Selection, Guest chorus; Special greetings, Mt. Shiloh Men's Club by Deacon Calvin Elliott; Promise Land Men's Club, Deacon Fleshman, Mt. Zion Men's Club of Red House by Mr. Raymond Williams. Two beautiful musical selections from the Mt. Zion Male Chorus, Jordan Men's Club by Mr. Chauncey Abbitt; A musical selection by the guest chorus; Introduction of guest speaker, Rev. R. Q. Lawing; Sermon, Rev. J. W. Paige, pastor of the Shiloh and Chestnut Grove Baptist Churches of Amherst; Musical selection, Guest chorus; Offering by Deacon L. A. Lawing and Mr. George Stevens and Mr. R. Q. Lawing, Jr. Special remarks and announcements were given by the pastor; Closing selection, Guest chorus; and benediction by Rev. Paige.

A large crowd attended the regular preaching service at the Galilee Baptist Church last Sunday morning at 11 a.m. Beautiful music was rendered by the church choirs. The pastor delivered a very helpful sermon.

All members and friends are invited to worship at the Promise Land Baptist Church this fourth Sunday morning at 11 a.m.

Regular preaching service was held at the Zion Baptist Church Sunday at 11 a.m. with the pastor, Rev. L. E. Hankins, pastor in charge. Music was furnished by the Junior Choir under the direction of Mrs. Florence Patterson. The senior ushers served at the door. Rev. Hankins' message was entitled "Make Up Your Mind". All present enjoyed the message. A large number of members and friends witnessed the service.

The church community extend deepest sympathy to Mrs. Minnie Ferguson and her family in the loss of her sister, Mrs. Lillian Ligon.

Mrs. Lizzie Harris, sister of Mrs. Ann Franklin, died in a Petersburg Hospital Sunday. At this time funeral arrangements are incomplete.

We are glad to learn that Mrs. Ora Smith is improving in a New York hospital.

All officers and members are asked to attend the regular evening service at the Mount Shiloh Church this Sunday evening at 7 p.m. Special music will be rendered by the Junior Choir.

Mrs. Lillie Stevens has returned to her home here after receiving special treatment in the Lynchburg General Marshall Lodge Hospital.

Mrs. Mary Francis Palmer Hunter was accidentally burned near her home in Mather, Va., last week. News received is that she is recovering nicely.

All Sunday Schools of the East and West Bound Sunday Union will convene with the Zion Baptist Sunday School on the fifth Sunday in this month at 10 a.m.

The special program sponsored at the Elementary School last Friday evening at 8 p.m. was well arranged and carried out. Mr. Cornell Goldman served as master of ceremony and gave a very hearty welcome to all. The guest speaker was Mr. Joseph F. Lewis. Special original literary selections were given by Mr. Darnell Stamps. Beautiful musical selections were given by the Harmonettes and the Charlotte County Chorus. The local Assembly was co-sponsor with the Appomattox Extension Service. The theme of the program was "Educational Awareness in Technical and Vocational Training."

Jordan

The Senior Choir will practice Friday night at 7:30 p.m. All members are asked to be present.

Regular preaching services will be held Sunday morning at 11 a.m. The public is invited to attend.

On Sunday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. the public is invited to attend the 25th anniversary of the Jordans Ladies Club. Guest speaker will be the Rev. Wyatt Tenable and his choir from the New Store Baptist Church.

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